broadband, Internet enabled kiosks termed as Common Service Centres (CSCs) in rural areas of the country. These Centres would be opened in the ratio of 1 CSC for every 6 Census villages in a State through Public Private Partnership. These Centres would provide a mix of Government and Private Services in rural areas. The Centres once established would provide better communication facilities to citizens in rural areas.

VMNOs to Indian Telecom Operators

2185. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Virtual Mobile Network Operators (VMNOs) service is currently being offered in European and US markets involving marketing and branding outfit through mutual agreements;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would also consider permitting VMNOs to Indian telecom operators to have alliance with foreign companies in order to complete with international market; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, according to consultancy firm Takashi Mobile, website of OFCOM (Telecom Regulator of United Kingdom) and information available on internet, Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs) are operational in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Norwey, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. MVNO business models are in the process of being launched in some other countries, namely Portugal, Spain, Italy, Croatia, The Baltics, Chile and Austria.

(c) and (d) Mobile Virtual Network Operator is a new kind of service and as per Section 11 of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997, the Government is required to seek recommendations of TRAI on need and timing for introduction of new service providers and regarding terms and conditions of license to be granted to such service providers. As on date, no decision in this regard has been taken by the Government.

New Telecom Licenses

2186. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the effect that existing Telecom companies have predicted that new telecom licenses will collapse in three years;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether this suggests that existing incumbent operators have significant market power to prevent growth of competition in the sector; and

(d) the steps Government and the Regulator are taking to ensure that market power of existing operators do not prevent free and fair competition?